

The type specimen of Bonin Grosbeak *Chaunoproctus ferreorostris*

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In their type catalogue of passerines held in the collection of the Natural History Museum (BMNH), Warren & Harrison (1971) recorded specimen BMNH 1855.12.19.39, which they considered an adult male but was referred to by Vigors (1839) as probably juvenile, as the holotype of Bonin Grosbeak *Chaunoproctus ferreorostris* (Vigors, 1829). However, Dickinson *et al.* (2001) refuted this and referred to BMNH 1855.12.19.39 as a lectotype of *C. ferreorostris*, on the basis that both Vigors (1839) and Sharpe (1888) had referred to two specimens, the other being BMNH 1855.12.19.71, noted by Vigors (1839) as probably adult on the grounds that 'Were we to judge from analogy, the more brilliantly plumaged bird would be the young, the more plainly coloured the adult; as is the case in the nearly allied group, the Pine Grosbeak, *Corythus enucleator*, Cuv.' (Vigors 1839: 22). These two specimens differ greatly in coloration, 1855.12.19.39 having much red in its plumage that 1855.12.19.71 entirely lacks.

Although Vigors (1839: 22) did note that 'There are two specimens of this species in the collection, differing, as above described, in their colours', in his very brief type description he mentioned only one (Vigors 1829), describing it using the identical Latin wording that he used in 1839 for the specimen he there defined as probably juvenile. Dickinson *et al.* (2001) are therefore incorrect that two syntypes ever existed, and specimen 1855.12.19.39 is indeed a holotype not a lectotype.

Warren herself had clearly originally been confused, as there is an initialled pencil annotation by her on the label of 1855.12.19.71 stating 'syntype. Another is selected'. She apparently derived this opinion from Sharpe (1888: 31), who wrote 'Voy. H.M.S. 'Sulphur.' (Types of species)' against his entry for the specimens. Sharpe was wrong about the voyage and that both specimens had type status, as Warren noted both for the voyage (Warren & Harrison 1971) and for the type status, regarding which she annotated 'no female was describ(ed)' in pencil against the entry for *C. ferreorostris* in an NHM library copy of Sharpe (1888) that she used in her types work.

References:

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